

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

— BY —

EBEN GREENOUGH SCOTT,

DELIVERED AT THE

Wyoming Monument,

JULY THIRD, 1893,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE OBSERVANCE OF THE

Anniversary of the Battle and Massacre,

TOGETHER

With the Order of Exercises of the Day



PRINTED FOR THE
WYOMING COMMEMORATIVE ASSOCIATION.

SECOND PRINT, W. B.

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Wyoming Commemorative Association

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ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
Wyoming Commemorative Association,

JULY THIRD, 1893.

At the Monument Grounds, Wyoming, Penn'a.

Order of Exercises.

1. MUSIC—"The Pilgrim's Song of Hope," *Batiste*
Ninth Regiment Band.
2. PRAYER— Rev. S. C. Logan, D. D.
3. MUSIC—"The Noblest," *Schumann*
Ninth Regiment Band.
4. PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS— Capt. Calvin Parsons
5. MUSIC—Fantasia—"A Tale," *Bach*
6. HYMN—"America," Orchestra and Audience
7. HISTORICAL ADDRESS— E. Greenough Scott, Esq.
8. MUSIC—Selection—"Daughter of the Regiment," . . . *Donizetti*
Ninth Regiment Band.
9. BRIEF ADDRESSES— { Henry A. Fuller, Esq.
Dr. Harry Hakes.
10. MUSIC—"Inflammatu8," *Rossini*
Ninth Regiment Band
11. NECROLOGY—Wesley Johnson, Geo. H. Butler, Esq.
12. BENEDICTION— Rev. J. Richards Boyle, D. D.
13. MUSIC—"Soldier's Farewell," *Kinkel*
Ninth Regiment Band.
14. "TAPS."

Address—Eben Greenough Scott

One-hundred and fifteen years ago, this very day, the sun shone down upon a scene which had this spot for its theatre; a scene which, ever since then, has lived in story, and which is still animate in the hearts of those descended from the men who suffered in the disaster of that day. The valley of the upper Susquehanna, from where the Chemung falls into it, southward to yonder break in the mountains, affords to-day a succession of charming views wherein intervals and dells, half-hiding old mills, and farmland studded with villages, are hemmed in by bold, wood-covered heights, between which flows the ever beautiful river. The blessed light of heaven, floods the landscape everywhere, and men come and go upon iron highways, and young men and maidens laugh and sing from boats upon the water. But in the bad old days, a forest, impenetrable to the sun's rays, shrouded the soil in gloom and mystery, so that the light failed to reach the ground, save at the river's bank or at an occasional clearing; nor was the passage of human beings practicable except upon the stream, or by the trail which wound along over the slippery roots of trees and the quaking hummocks of swamps. This trail and this river formed the path of communication between two races, between the white man and the red, between the New England settlers and the Iroquois, and these neighbors, by no means loving ones, even in the best of times, at the slightest alarm shunned the depths it traversed; the region straightway became a dark and bloody ground, and, at the first note of hostility, was left to the bear, the wolf, the panther and the venomous reptile.

In the latter part of June, 1778, none but stealthy scouts dared to penetrate these "dowie dens," or peer into these brooding solitudes, and the word they brought back was as sinister as the haunted forest itself. All at once scouts and wild beasts alike fell back from the life that suddenly filled the woods; for swarms of armed men now trooped their way along the trail or floated down the river in canoes. There was no music, no banners, no clanging cavalry nor rumbling artillery, no red-coated regulars, nor packhorses, droves of cattle, or wagons and tumbrils; but there strode along in single file copper-colored warriors, moccasined and with scalp-locks and feathers, with pendants, hanging from their ears and noses, and with their bodies painted in white, black, green, yellow and vermilion, and with wampum collars, silver bracelets and medals, and armed with gun, tomahawk and knife. These bedaubed and blanketed bands owed the little obedience they were capable of yielding to their allies and employers, who, in hunting shirts and leggings and carrying long muskets and rifles, gave to the motley column the slight appearance of regularity and order that it possessed. This latter element was white; it spoke English; it was American; nay it was of our kindred blood, and among it were some who had tilled these very fields, and having fled from them, were seeking to regain them by arms even though it should cost the blood of their successors to the possession.

As this picturesque but deadly array drew near, its approach was manifested by the preparations to resist it that were made by those upon whom its blows were to fall. The little settlements that dotted this plain were all astir. Every nerve was strained to make good the want of those who were in distant camps, and when the enemy entered the valley, a sturdy little column of defenders marched up the road to receive him. This movement, from a military point of view, was a radically mistaken one, and was against the judgment of the leaders; it

should have been made days before, when the enemy could have been ambushed in the woods and his advance retarded until our reinforcements arrived; or it should not have been made at all, but our forces have been concentrated at some point upon the opposite bank of the river. But it was made, and the inevitable results of a false movement ensued: our people met with speedy and irretrievable disaster.

There is no need of telling over again the oft-told tale, or reviewing the sickening scenes that followed our defeat. A cry of horror rose from the civilized world, and humanity, even on the floor of Parliament itself, protested against a recurrence of such barbarous warfare. The Massacre of Wyoming, however momentous it may have been to those immediately affected by it, was not of sufficient importance to directly vary, one way or the other, the result of the mighty contest then waging. It may have augmented our material force by reason of the sympathy abroad for the colonists which it had evoked, but this consideration is too doubtful and remote to be seriously entertained; but its further indirect effects in mitigating the horrors of war, by arousing humane sentiment in opposition to savage warfare between civilized belligerents, were unquestionably important. Sufficient to say, that it was speedily avenged, though justice displayed reprehensible blindness in the proceeding, for retaliation fell almost exclusively upon the least responsible of the evil-doers, the Indians, and not upon the principals, the Tories, and the Massacre of Wyoming, an incident of the Revolution, had played its part. It became as a tale that is told, and passed into history.

How shall we best commemorate this day? By the repetition of a century's eulogy and the repetition of a century's denunciation? The latter would betray a weakness that we certainly did not inherit from our ancestors; the former would be useless, for by this time mere eulogy has spent its force. Rather, let us praise the dead by

manifesting their virtues; and the best way to eulogize those who have laid down their lives for a cause, is to set forth this cause in its nobility and simplicity. There was something more in this day's work on our part than mere defence of home. I have said that this action was an incident of the Revolution; by the right or wrong, therefore, of the Revolution, must it be justified or condemned. Let us turn our attention for a moment, then, to consider whether the cause and the men were worthy of each other; whether the cause had righteousness enough in it to justify the great rupture in our race, and to justify the blood that was poured out for it. If it had such, then the men who fell here upon the third of July, seventeen hundred and seventy eight, should be partakers of the glory that always results from the success of a good cause.

Some writers account for the Revolution solely upon politico-economical grounds. Others attribute it entirely to the oppressive effect of the Navigation Act, or to the repressive effects of the acts against colonial manufactures; others, again, to the fact that the tobacco growers and Southern planters were getting behind hand and were falling in debt to British creditors, and others still to a long repressed and concealed spirit of contumacy, rather than of independence, which had no opportunity to make itself heard until the French wolf at their doors had been rendered harmless by the fall of Quebec. Others still attribute the revolt to colonial exasperation at imperial arrogance. Each of these views taken singly is too circumscribed and narrow to account for this tremendous schism in the English speaking race. Each, it is true, had its place, and was a motive, but it was a subordinate motive. Each had its effect, but no single one could have accomplished such a mighty result. The acknowledgment of our independence by the Treaty of Paris had justified our forefathers in taking up arms and pressing war to the bitter end. But of the reasons just specified was there any that taken singly would have justified the revolt in the eyes of

our ancestors, themselves or in those of the world? The greater part of the colonists came over or were born here after the Navigation Act had become one of the corner stones of British policy; after the acts of trade had stamped these regions as British factories. The arrogance of British officers had been curbed by the defeats of Braddock and Abercrombie and was really nothing but an irritation of the hour. We have the concurrent testimony of the best men North and South that while the supervision of the French revealed to the colonies their own powers, it did not arouse anything like a general desire for independence, and it is in vain to attribute the rupture to grievances arising from trade, when on the floor of the House of Commons and by political economists the world over, the British possessions in America were pointed to as illustrations of the most marvelous prosperity then known to men. In fact not only was the material prosperity of these colonies beyond comparison, but their political condition was almost Utopian. The colonists owned their land in fee simple, which was something the classes from which they sprung in Europe did not do; they had their own judiciary and their own parliaments; they governed themselves; they could not be taken across sea to fight battles of Great Britain; they had their own militia, and if this was not sufficient Great Britain was bound to defend them; they taxed themselves and not one penny could be drawn from them by imperial tax gatherers. Thus they were their own men and while they shared the benefits of the empire they were exempt from its burdens. Is it credible then that the Adamses, the Dickinsons, the Franklins, the Washingtons, the Randolphs and the like could have ever justified themselves for subverting this happy state by reason of economical conditions which enriched them; by arrogance at which they could afford a contemptuous smile; by the sense of power which the downfall of dangerous neighbors had aroused; by the paltry indebtedness of a few planters; by the restraint on navigation, which was really in

compensation of maritime defense, or by any reason which savored of the personal rather than the political?

No. They revolted because, from change of policy on the part of the home government these halcyon days were numbered, and through no fault of their own. Let it be clearly understood that our fathers took up arms, not to gain more, but to save as much as they could of what they already had. Not one of those men was so deluded as to suppose that he would gain by independence. On the contrary he knew well that such a Utopia as he had enjoyed could never be his again; that the best could not be bettered, and that if there was anything hazardous in this world it was to cast his fortune on that which never yet improved the citizen's condition—civil war. "There was not a moment during the Revolution," said John Adams, "when I would not have given everything I possessed for the restoration to the state of things before the contest began, *provided*, we could have had a sufficient security for its continuance." There is the whole thing in a nutshell. The "security for its continuance" was wanting.

The colonist's liberties and prosperity did not exist by right but by grace. Constitutional guaranty was lacking. We had no Bill of Rights and there lies the reason of the Revolution. All the other reasons so painfully dwelt upon are but incentives, if they amount to anything at all. But here is the great reason, the great motive of the revolt, that the colonial franchises which had been conferred by charter or acquired by time and custom were to be held as matters of grace and not of right, and that colonial prosperity henceforth was to be subject to the uncertain need of the imperial treasury.

It is not surprising, since the later American writers have indulged such narrow views of the motives of the Revolution of seventeen hundred and seventy-six, that the later British writers are to be found clinging to the still narrower opinion of their predecessors, and that they betray a

want of correct insight of the object of that Revolution. Thus in the fifty-first chapter of his history, Lord Mahon expresses the opinion, that had Lord Chatham's bill become a law, the Americans would have accepted it cheerfully; for it provided for the independence of the judiciary, it restricted the Admiralty courts to ancient limits, it reinstated the situation of seventeen hundred and sixty-four, and it recognized the general Colonial Congress. But the independence of the judiciary was already ours by a right superior to any that Parliament could confer; the ancient limits of the courts of Admiralty did not depend upon Parliament for their definition; while the recognition of Congress was coupled with the assertion of the supremacy of the British Parliament. This, of course, was utterly out of the question, from the colonial standpoint; it was asking all to concede that which each had already refused to yield, or, worse still, it was empowering Congress, the creature of the colonies, to grant that which the colonies, its creators, had brought it into being for the purpose of frustrating. Evidently, Lord Mahon failed to see that the opposing of the Americans was to Parliament as a ruler and not as a legislator, and that Congress itself was a standing denial to the supremacy of Parliament.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, in the twenty-third chapter of his *History of England* makes this surprising assertion: "Down to the moment of separation the Congress fully acknowledged the competency of King, Lords, and Commons to make laws, of any kind but one, for Massachusetts and Virginia. The only power which such men as Washington and Franklin denied to the Imperial legislature was the power of taxing." It is to be regretted that Lord Macaulay did not fortify his assertion respecting the attitude of Congress towards Parliament by proofs of the same. Respecting his assertion, that such men as Washington and Franklin admitted the supremacy of Parliament in everything except the power of taxing, it is likewise unfortunate that he has given us no instance, but

has confined himself merely to assertion. John Adams, the great agitator, was such a man as Washington and Franklin, and in respect to everything bearing upon the genesis of the Revolution was of much higher authority than Franklin who during all the time in which the Revolution was hatching was a resident of London, and therefore not in touch with the public opinion of those times in America; or than Washington, who, as every American school boy knows, was living remote from public affairs at Mt. Vernon, and had to be drawn from his chosen obscurity to take his seat in Congress. Now this is what Adams says, and one might almost suppose that he had risen from his grave to answer this very assertion of Macaulay; here it is: "The truth is, the authority of Parliament was never generally acknowledged in America. More than a century since, Massachusetts and Virginia both protested against even the act of navigation, and refused obedience for this very reason, because they were not represented in Parliament, and therefore were not bound." You will find this in the life works of John Adams, Vol. IV., pp. 47 and 48, and you will observe, that Adams, like Macaulay, cites the same colonies as illustrations of his contradiction, if you choose to call it so, which Macaulay did of his assertion, viz.: Massachusetts and Virginia, though, unlike Macaulay, Adams gives his proofs, viz.: the legislation, record evidence itself, of these colonies concerning the Act of Navigation. Surely here was one chapter in the history of America which the historian of England apparently had not read.

But what are we to say of one who is much more of a historian than Mahon, and much more of a historian, too, than Macaulay; a man broader and deeper than either of them, with a far more correct notion of the real nature of history than Macaulay ever displayed, and one who is not given to recklessness of statement. Yet this is what Mr. Lecky told a Birmingham audience, only 266 days ago, in an address since published under the title of

"The Political Value of History." After setting forth, that the Seven Years War had involved England in taxation under which she was reeling; that the old American colonies had benefited by this war more than any other part of the Empire; and that, if France ever regained her strength, one of her first objects would be to recover her dominion in America, he continues: "Under these circumstances Grenville determined that a small army of ten thousand men should be kept in America, under the distinct promise that it was never to serve beyond that country and the West Indian Isles, and he asked America to contribute £100,000 a year, or about a third part of its expense.

"But here the difficulty arose * * * there was no single Parliament representing the American colonies, and it soon became evident that it was impossible to induce thirteen State Legislatures to agree upon any scheme for supporting an army in America. Under these circumstances Grenville in an ill-omened moment resolved to revive a dormant power which existed in the Constitution, and levy this new war-tax by Imperial taxation. We at the same time guaranteed the colonists that the proceeds of this tax should be expended solely in America; he intimated to them in the clearest way, that if they would meet his wishes by themselves providing the necessary sum, he would be abundantly satisfied, and he delayed the enforcement of the measure for a year in order to give them ample time for doing so.

"Such and so small was the original cause of difference between England and her colonies."

This statement was made on the tenth of October last (1892), and it may be accepted as the latest expression of the British historical writers concerning the cause of the American Revolution. Mr. Lecky's statement of the facts is not so incorrect as to call for revision here, but his assumption of the power of Parliament to tax us must meet with flat contradiction. It is true that he touches this

subject gingerly—it was “a dormant power” and Grenville resolved to “revive” it. But, when had this dormant power ever been an active one? Not in the history of Ireland, which had never been taxed by the Imperial Parliament; never in the history of Scotland, before the Act of Union, and never before in the history of America. When then had this dormant power been an active one, and when had it gone to sleep to awake at this “ill-omened moment”?

The truth is, that the history of England, Ireland, Scotland and America may be ransacked in vain for one single instance of this power active or dormant, living or dead.

“Such and so small,” says Mr. Lecky, was the original cause of difference between England and her colonies.” Then the Revolution is not to be accounted for on politico-economical grounds, nor on the Navigation Act nor Manufacturing acts, nor on the tobacco-growers’ debts, nor on the uppishness of British Army officers, nor upon the colonial desire for independence, nor upon anything else than Grenville’s needless revival of a dormant power whose existence is, to say the least, doubtful. When the distinguished historian began his remarks upon the subject, he prefaced them by saying, that “you will often hear this event treated as if it were simply due to the wanton tyranny of the English government * * * but you will find that this is a gross misrepresentation.” As I had never heard or read any intelligent American treat this subject in such a reckless way, I supposed that he referred to English writers unknown to us but with whom he was familiar. Since his solemn statement of Grenville reviving a dormant power, however, a fact on its face savoring of the tyrannical, I am myself almost persuaded that his statement is true.

No, my friends, Grenville’s act was not the cause of our Revolution, but a mere irritant of it. His act was interpreted in these colonies to mean that absolutism had

taken the field against them, and that, if they meant to show themselves men, the colonists must meet and overthrow it. How could Mr. Lecky overlook the fact that Grenville himself admitted this in his last recorded expression concerning the taxation of the colonies: "Nothing" said he, "could induce me to tax America again but the united consent of King, Lords and Commons, supported by the united voice of the people of England * * I will never lend my hands towards forging chains for America lest in so doing I should forge them for myself." It was, then, absolutism which had been dormant and which was revived when we had this Bill of Rights to protect us, and the men that fell upon this field, fell victims to the Anglican absolutism of the eighteenth century.

First, then, to follow the sequence of time in its development, the cause that brought our forerunners upon this field was resistance to absolutism and the determination to establish colonial liberties upon the ground of right and not of grace. Secondly, as the necessity became clearer and more convincing, this sentiment developed into the desire for independence, which after the fourth of July, seventeen hundred and seventy-six, became the final motive of the revolt, and Thirdly, the Americans who fought on this field had another motive in the actual defence of their homes. Surely these men had a righteous cause, and by their self-sacrifice proved themselves worthy of their cause.

Let us show ourselves worthy of their cause and their sacrifice by adding to our commemoration to-day the performance of a duty. Our cause and the reputation of those who gave up their lives for it, are secure. Nothing can tarnish their glory, but their descendants can add to it by being just. We are not here, upon this spot, to apologize for the Tories, or to exalt the Loyalists; but, while I abhor and execrate those to whom is justly due the hated epithet of Tory, men like those who brought such woe upon this valley, I feel that we should show our self-respect by

respecting those whose misfortune it proved to be to differ with us in opinion, and I have therefore, a word to say for the Loyalists.

The adherents of the royal government were of two distinct classes, and let me assure you that there was very little affinity between them. We need no stronger proof of this, than the stipulation made by the New York exiles when they settled in Nova Scotia,* that the obnoxious element should not be introduced among them. They and our forefathers took the same view of these persons, and, consequently, we have substantial grounds for making a distinction between the apostates, the vengeful, the cruel, the greedy, the restless and self-willed, whom we include in the word "Tory," and the orderly, the well-regulated, the intelligent and honorable people whom we class as "Loyalists." Our fathers made this distinction in their time, and it is only fair that we should maintain it in ours. We all know that some of the best people in the land were among those who abandoned home, property, friends and relatives sooner than countenance that which they believed to be wrong. They acted in the fear of God and love of their king: our forefathers acted from the fear of God and love of independence. Both sides, then, had the moral motive of their cause in common, and differed only in the political motive. Their good should be confounded with their bad no more than ours should be. Hutchinson should not be polluted with the title that belongs to Girby, but let him and the DeLanceys, the Sewalls and the Dulanys, bear the name which was bought by their self-sacrifice and which became sacred to them. Loyal to their King they were, and no self-respecting American should ever fail to observe the distinction made by our ancestors, and, while he stigmatizes the unworthy with the hated name of Tory, do mere justice to the upright by designating them with the honorable title of Loyalists.

*Judge Haliburton; Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia, II. 195.

The Loyalist deserved a better fate than to have his name linked by posterity with those whose deeds he condemned and with whom he scorned to associate. Nowhere in the chronicles is there a more pathetic scene than that which occurred when the news of the peace reached New York. To the last the Loyalists believed that the King would have his own again and that they would return triumphant to their homes. When the hard reality broke upon them, they were plunged into despair. Ruin stared them in the face: Some "tore the lappels from their coats and stamped them under their feet and exclaimed that they were ruined; others cried out that they had sacrificed everything to prove their loyalty, and were now left to shift for themselves, without the friendship of their King and country."* Possessed with the idea that they would become victims to the insensate fury of their countrymen, if they remained where they were, twelve thousand men, women and children crowded transports and accompanied the British fleet in the evacuation of New York. On the southern shore of Nova Scotia, there is a charming bay, where a little village and farms come down to the water. In seventeen hundred and eighty-two it was a solitude. In seventeen hundred and eighty-three a large town of ten thousand people, housed in huts of bark and rough boards suddenly appeared; it lasted but a short time and the place relapsed into desolation. Poverty, distress, the irruption of the obnoxious class against which they had protested, and the inhospitable climate had scattered the refugees. And what was the character of these unfortunates? "Among the banished ones thus doomed to misery," says Sabin,† "were persons whose hearts and hopes had been as true as Washington's own; for, in the divisions of the families which everywhere occurred, and which formed one of the most distressing circumstances of the conflict, there were wives and daughters, who, although bound to Loyalists by the holiest ties, had

* Sabine's *Loyalists*, I. 90. † *Id.*, id. 91.

given their sympathies to the right from the beginning; and who now, in the triumph of the cause which had had their prayers, went meekly, as woman ever meets a sorrowful lot, into hopeless, interminable exile." This is what is said of them by a man, both of whose grandfathers were officers in the American army during the Revolution.

No farther seek their merits to disclose,
Or draw their frailties from their dread abode,
(Where they alike in trembling hope repose,
The bosom of their Father and their God.)

With a kind word, then, for those who honestly differ from us in opinion, and with intense sympathy and sorrow for those, who, having faith in us and in our cause, found their lot cast among our enemies, let us turn from the past to the present, and in a moment when we are taking the nations of the world to our bosom, greet with all our heart the great people from whom we severed ourselves, but who have come to behold our prosperity and to rejoice at it. The soil upon which we stand will not have been soaked with the blood of its defenders in vain, nor the memory of that bitter day be worthless, if the lesson taught be that of peace on earth and good will to men.

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